

Voting Equipment Subgroup

Vote Indiana Planning Team

February 28, 2003

Subgroup members present: Billie Breaux, Dick Dodge, Pam Finlayson, Claudia Cummings (proxy for Linda Grass), Dee Ann Hart, Laura Herzog, Jon Laramore, Martha Padish, Kristi Robertson, Todd Rokita, Robert Vane (proxy for Doris Anne Sadler).

Facilitator: Sarah Taylor

Others present: Duane Conover (Whiting Republican Central Committee), Mike Rothrock (Count Us In), Julia Vaughn (Count Us In)

Subgroup members introduced themselves and gave a status report of what their knowledge base was concerning voting equipment. Many members had experience at their county level. Kristi Robertson, Indiana Election Division provided a handout from their web page showing what systems were used in each of Indiana's counties as of July 1, 2002. As of November 2000, Indiana had 3110 precincts using lever or punch card machines.

Kristi gave a description of the certification of voting equipment process by the Indiana Election Commission. The certification is good for 5 years and then the vendor must reappear. All companies must go to an Independent Testing Authority (ITA). The ITA must evaluate any changes or upgrades to software or equipment.

Some members expressed concern about counties who had already spent money prior to November of 2000 to acquire new voting equipment. They hope monies will be made available for those counties.

Discussion followed about any accessibility requirements in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The members were inquiring if funds would be made available to purchase new equipment to meet the HAVA deadline. Questions were also brought up about some DRE equipment just needing upgrades for compliance. Discussion was then held on how to fund these upgrades. Comments were also made regarding differences between purchasing and leasing equipment.

Pollworker training and voter education will be two other key areas of review for subgroup members.

Public Comment:

Julia Vaughn representing the Count Us In program that is affiliated with the Governor's Planning Council on Disabilities testified that technology is rapidly changing in today's world. Julia thinks waiting to change equipment may allow time for new systems to hit

the market. She also indicated that the demand for new voting equipment is keeping costs high right now. Julia also stressed the importance of seeking local input.

Mike Rothrock, Count Us In, has concerns about the accessibility of voting equipment. Mike and his wife conducted a survey during the last election in Bartholomew County. He stated pollworkers are not allowing enough space between voting equipment and the wall for voters in wheelchairs. Mike also said DREs placed on tables may not work for voters in wheelchairs due to the difficulty in reading the screen.

At the next meeting, the subgroup decided to address the following four items from the Task Lists for Subgroups document they received:

How Indiana will adopt voting system standards consistent with HAVA. Impact of proposed federal “guidelines” on voting systems.

How Indiana will establish a fund for administering HAVA payments and how the Indiana fund will be managed. Role of budget agency, if any?

How Indiana will distribute and monitor distribution of HAVA funds, including eligibility criteria and monitoring performance. Should we use a “formula grant”, taking factors such as voting age population into account or a “competitive grant”. Should there be matching fund requirements for counties, with waivers or other methods to address “the neediest cases”? Should some or all of the funds be kept in strategic reserve, with revolving loan program? If revolving fund, is repaid money still considered “federal money” subject to federal audit? If there is a strategic reserve, would leasing equipment be preferable to purchase?

What will be the budget for doing so (HAVA funds + state matching amount), estimated cost of compliance, years in which the funds will be expended). Interrelationship of Section 102 grants and Title III requirements money.

Each member should review their HAVA guidelines document they received in the first mailing.

Next meeting will be March 7, 2003 at 1:00 p.m.